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5 DEC 1950

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Western Hemisphere Division

SUBJECT:

[redacted] Chinese Communist
Penetration in Latin America

REFERENCES:

A.
B.
C.

[redacted]

1. References A and B started an exchange of ideas [redacted] concerning the increase in Chinese Communist interest and activity in Latin America. Reference C indicates that this problem has become more acute during the past year, since political changes in Cuba have raised the possibility that the Castro regime may recognize Communist China, at once flouting United States policy and breaching the hitherto united position of Western Hemisphere nations on the Chinese question, and giving the Chinese Communist their first diplomatic foothold in the New World.

[redacted]

[redacted]

2. In the field of foreign relations Communist China's primary aim, aside from the general aims of international Communism, is to gain status as a world power. A symbol of this status would be membership in the United Nations. Recognition by, and diplomatic relations with, individual nations is at once a mark of increased national stature, and a step toward UN membership. In common with the other Communist countries, China regards trade as a political tool; the Chinese Communists have cultivated trade relations with countries where diplomatic recognition was withheld from them. (On 11 November 1959, in a farewell speech to a visiting Japanese statesman, CHOU En-lai said, "Some people want to separate politics from economics. This is ridiculous.") Even where trade is impossible, Communist China practices "people's diplomacy", encouraging visits to China by citizens of target nations, and sending cultural and friendship missions abroad. With the aid of local Communist and Communist-front groups, Chinese friendship societies have been established as centers for developing interest in and support for Communist China's political aims, distributing Chinese Communist

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propaganda, and creating local public opinion favoring trade with and recognition of Communist China.

3. In Latin America, Communist China has as yet been recognized by no country, and is therefore without diplomatic representation in the area. The only official Chinese Communist installation in the Western Hemisphere is the Havana office of the New China News Agency, established in 1959. Trade between Communist China and Latin America has, despite efforts on both sides, remained at a low level. In the field of "people's diplomacy" China has had greater success: Where there were only four Chinese friendship societies in 1956, there are now eight. China's interest in the area is attested by her propaganda efforts: During 1958 Spanish-language radio broadcasts beamed to Latin America from Peiping increased by 100 per cent, to a total of 20 hours a week; early in 1959 at least one new magazine was added to the list of eight already distributed in Latin America; during 1958 there was a ten-fold increase in commercial advertising sent from Communist China to Panama.

4. One of Communist China's main propaganda themes, addressed to her own people, the Soviet Bloc, and the Free World, is the extraordinary success of the regime at home. When this success is attributed to anything beyond the efforts of the Chinese people directed by the Chinese Communist Party under the inspired leadership of Chairman MAO, it is laid to assistance received from the Soviet Union and other members of the Bloc. China's progress thus is a testimonial to the effectiveness of Marxian-Leninist doctrines in bringing a backward nation to a position where it can speak of overtaking an established capitalist nation such as the United Kingdom. Against this progress is offset the condition of countries unblest by socialism and forced to rely on the assistance of the United States, the imperialist arch-enemy, according to Chinese Communist doctrine. This line is calculated to appeal to any anti-nordamericano sentiments among the Latin Americans. Its success in Cuba is important.

5. It has been suggested, though by no means firmly established, that Communist China has been given the main role in directing the Latin American Communist Parties. Both Prague, and the Soviet Embassy in Mexico, have helped in the area-wide distribution of Chinese Communist literature. It is possible that Communist China's anti-American line, together with the Chinese Communist doctrine of "multiple roads to socialism" and Communist China's striking example of phenomenal progress by a non-European nation, without Western European help, may be felt by the leaders of internationalism to be peculiarly adapted to the Latin American audience. Communist Chinese propaganda clearly indicates that the Chinese Communists see themselves as the future leaders of the non-European, former colonial peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. (On 25 January 1959 rallies were held in Peiping to express China's heartfelt solidarity "with the heroic struggle of the Cuban people and

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the fight for national freedom of the people of the Congo.")

6. Although concerned with overseas Chinese communities throughout the world, as sources of foreign exchange, and as possible nuclei for favorable local public opinion, Communist China does not appear to have made any especial effort among the relatively small communities in Latin America. The proposed revival of a Chinese Communist daily paper in Havana, under the direct guidance of the new ECNA office, appears to be the first concerted effort to expand Communist China's influence on the Chinese in Latin America. In general, however, the Chinese Communists seem to have written off the overseas Chinese communities in the Latin American countries as being for the present, at least, hopelessly under Chinese Nationalist influence.

8. Policy guidance in NSC 5902/1 covers the general means of limiting Sino-Soviet bloc influence and developing greater awareness of the threat of international Communism in Latin America. It recommends the encouragement (a) of legislation to control Communist activities and propaganda materials, and (b) of official action to limit travel to Communist China, restrict visits of Communists to Latin American countries and to prevent certain types of trade. At the same time it urges that efforts be made, without exposing the hand of the United States Government, to expose the activities of local Communists and the Sino-Soviet bloc as they affect Latin America. The steps to be taken are largely those that would be handled by the Department of State and are designed to limit the distribution of propaganda, restrict "people's diplomacy," prevent certain types of trade, and prevent the opening of new Bloc diplomatic establishments.

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Although Communist China has no diplomatic, financial, or trade representation in Latin America, CCP connections with Communist Parties in the area are of long standing, and fairly close (Latin American Communists have been trained in China). One point of the Chinese platform that has been espoused by some Latin American Communists is the selection of U.S. imperialism as the primary target. On at least two occasions the Soviet Embassy in Mexico has distributed Chinese Communist literature in Latin America - releasing materials of the type promulgated by Chinese embassies where they exist. This suggests that Chinese leadership in this area has the blessing of the CPSU.

To gain closer relations with Latin America, the Chinese Communists have used the following means: Development of friendship societies (strongest in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico), subsidizing travel of Latin Americans to China, increased dissemination of printed and broadcast propaganda materials, efforts to develop trade and cultural exchanges.

Recent changes in the Cuban regime have afforded the Chinese Communists an opportunity to establish in Havana an office of the New China News Agency, which is expected to revive a Communist Chinese newspaper there. In other Latin American countries NCHA correspondents exist, but are non-Chinese. Daily Spanish language broadcasts have been recently increased to 21 hours per week.

A full assessment of Communist China's assets in South America will require more precise information on (1) the strength of the Communist Parties and front organizations in each country, and (2) the circulation of Chinese Communist and similar publications in the area.

With the possible exception of Cuba, Communist China seems to have written off the overseas Chinese populations in Latin America.

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